United Nations A/71/PV.80

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

80th plenary meeting
Thursday, 4 May 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/71/764/Add.6 and A/71/764/Add.7)

The Acting President: I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/71/764/Add.6 and Add.7, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/71/764/Add.5, the Sudan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have made the payments necessary to reduce their arrears below the amounts specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in documents A/71/764/Add.6 and Add. 7?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: Members will recall that at, its 65th plenary meeting, on 19 December 2016, the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 106. In order for the Assembly to take action on the draft resolution before it today, it will be necessary to reopen the Assembly's consideration of that item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of agenda item 106?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2016, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 106 to the Third Committee. In order to enable the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to consider agenda item 106 directly in plenary meeting and to proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 106 (*continued*)

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Draft resolution (A/71/L.65)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.65, entitled "Modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.65?

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The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 71/287).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position following the adoption of the resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Grant (Canada): I have the honour to deliver this joint explanation of position on behalf of Australia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand and my own country, Canada.

Let me begin by thanking the co-facilitators for their work in bringing resolution 71/287 forward. We appreciate their efforts.

Our delegations joined the consensus on this resolution in order to allow the substantive work on an important event to commence as soon as possible. However, we wish to express our disappointment with the substance of the resolution and the process leading to its adoption, in four areas in particular.

First, the text falls short of our expectations in that it does not reflect key developments that have taken place since the adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons in 2010 — most prominently the 2030 Agenda, which references human trafficking and modern slavery in three of its 17 goals. In our view, that constitutes an important and carefully negotiated shift to a broader and more comprehensive approach than the one reflected in the Global Plan of Action. In not reflecting the fact that new challenges have emerged since the adoption of the Globan Plan of Action, it runs the risk of adopting and outdated approach instead of taking the opportunity to move a key aspect of the 2030 Agenda forward in its human rights, development and law enforcement dimensions. This concern was expressed clearly by our delegations in the negotiating process. We regret that the text does not reflect our suggestions. Our expectation is that the political declaration will remedy this deficiency, as discussed with the co-facilitators in our bilateral consultations.

Secondly, while we appreciate the efforts of the co-facilitators to deliver a consensus outcome, the text does not enable the engagement of the full range of stakeholders working on trafficking at national and international levels. We recognize the importance of national human rights institutions being invited to engage in the preparatory one-day meeting. It is regrettable, however, that they will not be able to participate in the high-level meeting itself in an independent capacity. As our delegations noted throughout the negotiations, the participation of national human rights institutions in any other form, including on Government delegations, can compromise their purpose and objectives and might also mean that many are not invited to participate at all. As recognized by a growing number of United Nations bodies and processes, including recent modalities discussions, national human rights institutions have significant contributions to make to our deliberations at the United Nations. We will certainly be looking to ensure that this is recognized in our substantive discussions on this issue moving forward.

Thirdly, we also regret that the resolution does not invite special procedures mandate-holders to attend the high-level meeting, other than the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons. This is in direct contradiction to the Global Plan of Action, in which we supported the role and mandates of a range of special mandate-holders. It also contradicts the shift, as expressed in the 2030 Agenda, to a broader and more comprehensive approach to combat trafficking in persons and modern slavery.

Finally, we would like to underline that any outcome must complement what was agreed upon in the Global Plan of Action, in order to assist us in achieving our common goal to combat and eradicate trafficking in persons and modern slavery. This document should also reflect the important developments that have taken place since the adoption of the Global Plan of Action, including by identifying gaps and areas where greater or new focus may be required to implement the different elements of the Global Plan of Action.

Mr. Inguanez (Malta): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 member States.

The European Union would like to thank the co-facilitators for all their work on resolution 71/287. We participated in the three rounds of informal negotiations and we recognize the difficulty of reaching consensus. We also thank all delegations for their constructive engagement on the text.

However, we regret that several proposals, which are important to the European Union and which we believe would have strengthened key elements of the resolution, were not accepted during the negotiations. Given the crucial contribution of civil society to the fight against trafficking, we would have preferred

a more inclusive and transparent approach to civil society participation.

While we appreciate the inclusion of national human rights institutions in the resolution adopted, it would have been preferable to invite such bodies to participate in the high-level meeting independently of their respective national delegations, not least because of the importance of safeguarding their autonomous status.

Furthermore, while we welcome the inclusion of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in the opening plenary meeting, we believe that all United Nations special procedures mandate-holders and treaty bodies working on trafficking and related issues should have been invited to participate in the high-level meeting.

In the light of the important developments over the years since the adoption of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, we believe it would have been appropriate for one of the panels to focus on emerging issues in the field of trafficking.

Once again, we would like to express our appreciation to the co-facilitators. We look forward to constructive and transparent negotiations towards agreement on the political declaration. The European Union is strongly committed to the fight against trafficking in persons. We look forward to the high-level meeting as an opportunity to discuss this important issue in the United Nations and further enhance our joint efforts to eradicate trafficking in persons.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Catherine Boura of Greece and Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani of Qatar, co-facilitators of the informal consultations, who demonstrated great ability and patience in their conduct of the discussions and complex negotiations on resolution 71/287. I also thank members for their valuable contributions to reaching agreement on the resolution.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 106.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.